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From: Ham-Equip Mailing List and Newsgroup <ham-equip@ucsd.edu>
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Ham-Equip Digest Sun, 22 Aug 93 Volume 93 : Issue 18

Today's Topics:
Challenge -- Lowest-cost HF option to get on air?

Send Replies or notes for publication to: <Ham-Equip@UCSD.Edu>
Send subscription requests to: <Ham-Equip-REQUEST@UCSD.Edu>
Problems you can't solve otherwise to brian@ucsd.edu.

Archives of past issues of the Ham-Equip Digest are available
(by FTP only) from UCSD.Edu in directory "mailarchives/ham-equip".

Date: 21 Aug 93 15:14:19 GMT
From: ogicse!emory!news-feed-1.peachnet.edu!gatech!wa4mei!ke4zv!
gary@network.ucsd.edu
Subject: Challenge -- Lowest-cost HF option to get on air?
To: ham-equip@ucsd.edu

In article <gganderson.46.745865743@augustana.edu> gganderson@augustana.edu (Kevin
Anderson -7325) writes:
>Let me pose this question to this group to see what
>comes of it:
>
>What is the lowest and reasonable costing option to
>get on the air to do 40m CW? How does that change
>to also want to add 10m CW and SSB?
>
>Qualifiers:
>
>By reasonable, I mean a rig sufficient in power to make
>a reasonable number of regular contacts as to not get
>discouraged in the hobby. QRP, where I know some equipment
>is low-cost, may qualify if contacts are possible under
>my criteria of contacts. What's a sufficient number of

>contacts? You tell me, as you are on the air.
>
>By 40 and 10meters, I mean the novice sub bands, as I am
>just licensed for novice privileges.
>
>New or used equipment could qualify here.

A TS520 is the easiest option, or a Drake TR4. Any of the
older tube transceivers would do, and most run well over
100 watts and are to be found at hamfests for $125-$450
depending on model and condition. I have an old favorite,
the Galaxy V MkII, that is ocasionally seen at hamfests
for as little as $100, and it's a 400 watt PEP SSB rig
that can be used fixed or mobile. I had a ball running
counties on the county hunter net on 20 meters with this
rig in a 67 Chevy. I could work anyone I could hear.
Note that some of these radios have the power supply
built in while others house it in the speaker enclosure.
It should be considered part of the rig though, don't
buy one of these transceivers without it. Also note that
these older radios essentially had the tuner *built in*
since the ouput pi networks could match most coax fed
antennas.

If you are open to building, QST has featured many DC
receivers and CW transmitters over the years. Even
SSB isn't hard with today's parts, and you could modify
a junk SSB CB set for pennies to work on 10 meters.

>Why ask? QST recently (within last year) had an article that
>talked about cost of getting into the hobby. They compared
>cost of major pieces of equipment (ICOMS, etc) against the cost
>of living index, etc., for today and say ten years ago. Their
>conclusion was basically no difference in terms of number of
>weeks of salary.
>
>To me the cost of getting on the air is real and not trivial,
>at least from my looking at catalogs, but I would like your
>opinion and suggestions. Besides, this is a challenge for
>you to consider.

Well I'd go further than QST. The fraction of a rig that
delivers the necessary RF capabilities is cheaper today than
in the 1950s, 1960s, or 1970s even in unadjusted dollars.
Now that's a slightly different criteria than QST used, but
it's not fair to compare one of today's top of the line radios
with those available in the past. The differences are too great.
The new rigs have all kinds of bells and whistles that weren't

possible on the older radios. Now most of those things don't impact RF functionality one whit, but they do add to the cost of the newer rig.

When you consider inflation, today's rigs are real bargains compared to what radios of the 50s, 60s, and 70s cost new. For example, a B&W 6100 synthesized 180 watt SSB transmitter cost $895 in 1964, but that's $10,740 in 1992 dollarettes. A Drake TR4 cost $495 in 1968, but that's over $5,000 in today's dollarettes. Suddenly those $895 Japanese radios look like the bargains they are, don't they?

Gary
--

Gary Coffman KE4ZV | "If 10% is good enough | gatech!wa4mei!ke4zv!gary
Destructive Testing Systems | for Jesus, it's good | uunet!rsiatl!ke4zv!gary
534 Shannon Way | enough for Uncle Sam." | emory!kd4nc!ke4zv!gary
Lawrenceville, GA 30244 | -Ray Stevens |

End of Ham-Equip Digest V93 #18
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